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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are "strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783] • penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

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Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822] of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of [171] e world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793] even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

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The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately. Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bathing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puritanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

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cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as employing informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative experiences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorganization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in